

PEOPLE WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Johnson Engineering's Vanessa Klyng Tilley has decided to accept one of the most challenging moments in her life. And she's not only doing it to fulfill a personal goal – she's also doing it to help others. She is running the Honolulu Marathon Dec. 9 to raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Tilley said she was inspired to run a marathon about six years ago when her previous manager was training for the Houston Marathon. While she was motivated, she couldn't help but think how she hated running. "Just listening to him talk about running 10 to 15 miles around Clear Lake seemed impossible," she said.

As he would talk about his training, she thought about how awesome it would be to complete a marathon when she turned 40. She even gave it a good try when she hit that milestone last January by attempting to run the Houston Marathon. However, she was unable to finish.

"I really didn't train properly and had no motivation to help me out on days when I didn't feel like running. So when I began to explore my options to run another marathon before my 40th year was over, I was told about Team In Training," she said. "As I pondered the thought of more running, I realized that this was the way that I wanted to go."

Team In Training is the top running, walking and cycling endurance training program in the country. It accounted for 25,500 participants last year who undergo personalized training to run, walk or cycle one of 40 accredited

To run or not to run?



Johnson Engineering's Vanessa Klyng Tilley is determined to complete the Honolulu Marathon Dec. 9 to raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Her honor patient is 5-year-old Matthew Maultsby of Sugar Land, pictured above with Tilley. He has acute lymphocytic leukemia.

endurance events nationwide. Team In Training has raised more than \$235 million to help fund cancer research and patient support services.

Tilley said her choice was a good one.

"Team In Training provides me with a training and support system that I will need to finish this race, not to mention that I have an honor patient that I will be running for," she said. "His name is Matthew and

he is 5 years old. He lives in Sugar Land and has acute lymphocytic leukemia."

Vanessa explained her thought process when she slowly turns off the alarm at 4:30 a.m. on her scheduled mornings to run. She said it's very difficult to get up and run when she's tired and challenged with the Houston heat and humidity. Yet when she runs, all she thinks about when "her face is beet red and her legs are hurting" are the people she is running for.

"As I drive to my running location – whether it be on the treadmill at the gym or running the Kemah bridge as the sun rises on the horizon – I begin to think that I am too tired to go on, or I don't feel as strong today as the day before, and I cannot complete the run," she said.

"I then think of the numerous trips to the doctor and hospital that many patients must endure or the pain people have suffered due to the loss of loved ones."

The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society has set a fund-raising goal of \$4,900 for her to meet. She has asked her friends and family if they would be willing to pledge a buck a mile, which is a total of \$26.20.

"In addition to running for Matthew, the people that have donated money to the cause are counting on me to cross the finish line," she said. "How much more motivation do you need than that?"

If anyone is interested in signing up with Team in Training to run one of several upcoming races in Honolulu, Disney, Bermuda or Houston, contact Tilley at x48364. You may also contact her at that extension if you would like to make a donation. Some contractors will do a matching-gift contribution. ■



Boeing's Chip Heinol rides with purpose

Boeing subsystem engineer Chip Heinol is another JSC staff member who is working to make a difference in the lives of others. Here he details his experiences while participating in the MS150, which took place April 21-22.

The annual MS150 is a two-day charity bicycle ride from Houston to Austin. Thousands ride or volunteer in an effort to raise money for the Lone Star Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Chip hopes by sharing his experiences, others might train to participate in upcoming charity bike tours too.

The morning starts early before the sun can poke its head above the horizon. I find my way to the start of the 2001 MS150 and wonder what the weekend will hold in store.

As you begin to pedal your way on a 174-mile journey to Austin, all types of thoughts can fill your head. This year I felt a great deal of anxiety before the ride. I've been training and thinking about the ride for three months and it's finally here. All the hard work will hopefully pay off.

I calm down as the ride gets under way and I am thankful it is a beautiful morning. Seeing so many people on the ride, you realize you are not alone in the challenge of riding a bicycle to Austin. With so many caring people, neither are those suffering from Multiple Sclerosis (MS).

Many others volunteer their time to make the ride a success. Police, emergency medical personnel, Cub Scouts,

truck drivers and corporations all lend support. Many employees in the space program and their families participate as well. Several contractors including Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Oceaneering and USA have employee teams.

I ride in several organized bike rides each year and tend to think of the MS150 as just another ride. Often, those with MS come out at various points along the ride to wave and cheer. It's touching to see smiles on the faces of those your helping to raise money for. It reminds me that they appreciate the efforts of those riding as much as I enjoy making the trip. Seeing those people puts a human touch on the event and helps me remember that it is more than just another bike ride. Last year, the tour raised more than \$3 million.

One hundred miles from the start in Houston, a tent city of 13,000 people

assembles at the overnight stop at the fairgrounds in LaGrange. Hot, tired and fighting cramps in my left leg, I finally cross the finish line at 5:30 p.m. It was a tough first day but I made it the entire way myself. I drop off my bike, get my luggage and find my way to our team tent to sit down to dinner and relax.

In La Grange, the tour provides most



Boeing subsystem engineer Chip Heinol hopes others will turn their hobbies into projects that will better the lives of others in need.

everything you need for your overnight stay. A place to store your bike, a hot meal, a bus ride to a (usually) hot shower and the all-important port-a-potties. Some opt to stay in area hotels; others stay in tents at the fairgrounds. There is plenty of space under our large team tent so I opt to spend the night there.

At the beginning of the second day, I am tentative and start off slowly. Although breakfast was tasty, it did not sit well and it adds to my anxiety by feeding thoughts of not finishing. Riding the second day, you

begin to enjoy (or curse) the rolling hills leading into Austin. I enjoy them as they are a welcome change to my usual flat rides around Clear Lake.

Before lunch the second day, the route winds through scenic Beucher/Bastrop State Park. The park is one of the prettiest parts of the ride, but also the most challenging. The hills are steep and plentiful.

The last portion of the ride is enjoyable. My legs feel good, it's not very hot and we have been graced with a tailwind the last 20 to 30 miles.

I begin to feel a bit of exhilaration knowing the finish line is not far ahead. It persuades me to pick up the pace the last 10 to 15 miles and make a charge for the finish.

Riding across the finish line in Austin, it is a festive atmosphere. Upbeat music is playing and hundreds of people line the finish line and clap and cheer. I can relax and enjoy the feeling a job well done. Soon I will be home and it will all be over. The MS150 will be back next year and I look forward to riding in it again.

My story about riding in the 2001 MS150 deserves no special recognition. I share it with you in hopes that it will make you consider joining the thousands of others who have discovered the fun and camaraderie of getting together for a good cause and riding in the MS150 bike tour.

Thinking about riding? Want to volunteer? For more information, go to: www.ms150.org